

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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February 9, 1998 LB 799

Mrs. Reta Parker. Mrs. Creaseman is from McCook, and Mrs. Parker is from Denver. They are the mother and aunt of Lee-Ellen Matzke, Senator Matzke's wife. And as a note, Senators, Mrs. Creaseman was the fifth grade teacher of Governor Nelson in McCook. So would you please be recognized by your Legislature. Senator Witek.

SENATOR WITEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. I am not going to be voting for the Crosby amendment, nor LB 799. I am a supporter of the arts. I've had discussion with Senator Chambers and others on the floor that I am an artist, if you want to call me that, although I use that term very loosely myself, and at one time wanted to do that professionally. So it's not that I am not a supporter of the arts. As a room mother, I also worked on picture parent programs in my kids' school to bring art to their schools, because they couldn't stretch the budget quite far enough. And I understood then that it was necessary for those of us who find this area very important for our children, to go ahead and volunteer our time and money and whatever knowledge we have in this area and share that with...at the time they were elementary students. So I have supported the arts in one way or another my entire life. I enjoy the arts, I enjoy music. It has nothing to do with my personal feelings on, I guess, arts and the humanities. What it has to do with is my responsibilities as an elected individual to decide the best use of tax dollars. And as the federal government has made a decision to cut back on these programs, if you'll read in your fiscal note, that's part of the reason that we are being asked to put this money into these programs, because of those federal cutbacks. Well, I think you should think long and hard before you start this concept of the state filling in where the federal government has cut off funding, because it's going to get very expensive. We cannot make up for the federal government cutbacks, nor do I think should we make up for the cuts at the federal level. I think that this is an area where people can support the arts privately. I don't think this is an area where government needs to step in and prioritize tax dollars for this area, and I wouldn't support a trust fund in this area. And I...nothing against Senator Crosby, who I respect very much, but this is an area that I simply don't think, as we cut back on the cost of government, both at the federal level and the state level, that